



CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The 109th Session of the United States Congress marks the 6th term served by U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee. She represents the Eighteenth Congressional District of Houston, Texas and sits on three Congressional Committees.

Currently, in the 109th Congress, Rep. Jackson Lee serves in the House Committees on the Judiciary, Science, and Homeland Security – a Committee that was made permanent in January 2005 by Congress. In the Committee on the Judiciary, she sits as the Ranking Democrat of its Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims – the only female Ranking Democrat in the Committee. She also sits on the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

In the Committee on Homeland Security, she sits on three Subcommittees: Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity; Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment; and Management, Integration, and Oversight.

Furthermore, in the Committee on Science, Rep. Jackson Lee serves as a senior member on the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics. Recently, she offered an amendment to the appropriations committee to fund NASA fully when those dollars had been cut by the Administration.

In terms of her experience as an international advocate, she has traveled everywhere from Baghdad, Iraq to visit troops in major combat zones to Oslo, Norway to coalesce with women leaders on the issue of establishing world peace.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) traveled to Singapore on January 10, 2005 and continued to Sri Lanka with a Congressional Delegation on a mission to survey the damage and destruction caused by the tsunamis in the Indian Ocean and killed over 150,000. Joining Rep. Jackson Lee on this delegation were Representatives Joseph Crowley (D-NY), Steve Israel (D-NY), Al Green (D-TX), and Linda Sanchez (D-CA).

She and the delegation met with the Singapore Prime Minister Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Senior Minister and former Prime Minister Mr. Goh Chok Tong, and Defense Minister Mr. Teo Chee Hean. They spoke with the government officials on the extent of structural damage that was caused by the tsunami, the status of the multinational rescue efforts, and what can be done on a regional basis through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and how to address the immediate needs of those affected by the tsunamis. The Delegation arrived in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo on Sunday, January 16, and was hosted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Rep. Jackson Lee met with the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, who provided an insight into the immediate needs of the Sri Lankan people affected by the tsunami and the efforts being

made by the Sri Lankan government to deal with the natural disaster. She remarked that the Sri Lankan government has been heroic in the weeks since the tsunami hit its shores and that they have given tremendous cooperation to U.S. aid groups. The Foreign Minister also conveyed his gratitude for the generous support and assistance that has been given by the American government and its people. In Galle, Sri Lanka, she visited a maternity hospital that had been destroyed by the tsunami. The doctors and medical officials on the scene described how pregnant women and newborn infants were courageously evacuated from the maternity hospital before the tsunami destroyed everything. Even more miraculously, doctors were able to carry a woman through labor and safely deliver her child, even as the waves began to crash upon the shores of Galle. She remarked about the miracles that took place in that hospital and the courage of the doctors who refused to leave any patient behind showed the indomitable spirit of the Sri Lankan people. The Congresswoman also led the Delegation in presenting the hospital with some much needed medical supplies, which she had brought in to Sri Lanka. Prior to embarking on the trip, she formed a group known as Houston's Solutions for Tsunami Victims. The alliance held a Medical Relief Drive and Save the Children Effort in Houston on January 9, 2005 in which thousands of vital medical supplies were collected to be delivered to tsunami stricken areas.

In June 2003, Rep. Jackson Lee's diplomacy brought international business leaders to the 18th Congressional District. She hosted a business forum at the Four Seasons Hotel featuring His Excellence Abdulla Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Minister of Energy, Industry, Electricity and Water for the State of Qatar along with many of his colleagues. His Excellency Abdulla Bin Hamad is also the President of the OPEC Ministerial Conference. Several members of the business community in the greater Houston area were given an opportunity to explore the prolific economic resources that the region has to offer. As a founding member of the Congressional Qatari-American Economic, Strategic Defense, Cultural and Educational Partnership Caucus she felt a sense of achievement in having facilitated this event.

In June 2003, the Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders invited Rep. Jackson Lee to sit as an Honorary Chair for its Women's Partnership for Peace in the Middle East summit in Oslo, Norway, which assembled an unprecedented 70 women from Israel, Palestine, the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Along with 28 members of the Democratic Party and led by the Democratic Whip, she spent a week in Israel on a Congressional Delegation, one of the largest to ever visit the country. In a series of meetings and historic surveys of locations of strategic and cultural importance, the Delegation made advancements in the struggle to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Taking that trip was a necessary part of the initial phases of the peace process in the region. She developed a frame of reference with which to devise realistic ways to achieve peace.

As a Member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security and the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security, she always underscores the fact that terrorism is a real threat for all borders. For her, it is important that America apply some of the principles and tools employed in supporting the First Responders within her borders to counsel the First Responders close to the West Bank of Israel. The Congresswoman traveled to U.S. ports located in California and Colorado along with co-Members of the Select Committee in June of 2003 to analyze critical infrastructure and related facilities relied upon by U.S. First Responders with field hearings and inspections. Meetings with Cabinet Members and both the Palestinian and Israeli Prime Ministers regarding the status of the Roadmap for Peace allowed her to return to Congress with clear legislative initiatives.

Rep. Jackson Lee traveled to Algiers, Algeria on Wednesday, April 7, 2004. The Algerian government invited the Congresswoman, along with members of the African Union, the Arab League, the United Nations, and the European Parliament to observe its presidential elections held on Thursday, April 8,

2004. It was an honor for her to be the sole representative of the U.S. Congress charged with the duty of observing such an important phase of the nascent democracy. She reported to Congress and to the American people her findings as to the transparency, fairness, openness, and peacefulness of Algeria's presidential election.

On Wednesday, April 7, 2004, the Congresswoman had meetings with the Algerian State Minister of Foreign Affairs; the President of the upper house of the Algerian Senate; the Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in Charge of Participation and Investment Promotion; and Richard Erdman, U.S. Ambassador to Algeria. In these meetings, she discussed areas such as: the history of the electoral process and democracy in Algeria; foreign investment opportunities; security; human rights and civil liberties; freedom of the press; the legal process and adherence to the rule of law; international trade; and barriers to trade and democracy. The Algerian government was both enthusiastic and ready to foster trade with and investment with American companies – small and medium as well as large-scale. Furthermore, the different ministries showed an eagerness to learn from the experience of American government and private systems through possible future missions to the U.S. for observation and training.

In addition, she met with the President of the People's National Assembly and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade to exchange dialogue regarding Algeria's efforts to conduct fair, open, transparent, and safe elections; develop a representative government that is accessible to its constituents; create a robust trade relationship with the U.S.; and develop an economic environment that will attract and maintain American and other foreign investment.

She visited polling stations and offices of local governors, or "Walis," in Bouzaraia, Babeloud – at its university campus, Boumerdese – site of the deadly earthquake of May 21, 2003, Blida, and Hydra in Algiers and the vicinity to observe the process and voter turnout. She was able to interview voters to get their impressions and witness a final count at a local polling station in Hydra.

Furthermore, on April 12-17th, Rep. Jackson Lee joined six other Congressional Black Caucus members on a fact-finding mission organized by the Brazil-U.S. Business Council. The mission focused on expanding opportunities for African-American businesses in Brazil through trade and partnerships with the Afro-Brazilian business community, creating closer links between the Congressional Black Caucus and their counterparts in the Bloco Negro of the Brazilian congress and developing a more robust dialogue on civil rights and empowerment issues between both communities. The trip was led by Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA), Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus foundation, and was made possible through the corporate sponsorship of Citigroup, PhRMA, General Motors, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the Port of New Orleans, iGATE Technologies, Odebrecht and Coca Cola, as well as the support of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. During the week, the delegation visited with private-sector, government and community leaders in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília and Salvador. During the delegation's visit to Rio they discussed access to medicines issues with the leadership of GSK, as well as the broader commercial relationship with the directors of the American Chamber of Commerce for Brazil - Rio de Janeiro. In São Paulo, the delegation discussed how to find a way forward in the Free Trade Area of the Americas process with the leadership of the São Paulo State Federation of Industry (FIESP) and the Brazil Section of the Brazil-U.S. Business Council. Particularly noteworthy was the delegations' participation, and the Brazil Council's organizational role in, a historic African-American/Afro-Brazilian Business Summit. The Summit brought together nearly two hundred private and public sector leaders from both communities to discuss potential partnerships in the economic and political arenas and was hosted by the American Chamber of Commerce for Brazil – São Paulo, the Brazil-U.S. Business Council and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

The delegation's visit to Brasília focused on three issues: reinvigorating the Free Trade Area of the

Americas process, civil rights and empowerment issues and strengthening the dialogue between the political leadership of the African origin communities of both countries. The delegation discussed the status of the FTAA negotiations and how to create opportunities for empowering the African-American and Afro-Brazilian business communities in the process with Minister of Development Luiz Furlan, Chief FTAA Negotiator Regis Arslanian and the members of the FTAA Oversight Committee in the Brazilian Congress.

The delegation discussed civil rights and empowerment issues with Rep. Luiz Alberto, Chairman of the Black Caucus in the Brazilian legislature, Sen. Paulo Paim, sponsor of an important affirmative action bill, and were welcomed by President of the Chamber of Deputies João Paulo Cunha who used the opportunity to underscore his support for Sen. Paim's bill. The delegation spent their final days in Salvador, Bahia, the heart of Brazil's Afro-Brazilian community and visited Grupo Bagunção, a USAID-funded program to provide education and empowerment to children in one of Salvador's poorest communities. They also met with Bahia state's Vice Governor to discuss opportunities for bilateral business partnership in the tourism area, focused on the African-American market. The group also met with executives at Odebrecht to learn about their considerable portfolio of construction projects in the U.S. and their efforts to stimulate minority business involvement through subcontracting.

Rep. Jackson Lee has long been a strong advocate for increased funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for state and local programs that provide emergency home repair for seniors and the disabled as well as for affordable housing programs. In 2004, the total amount of federal resource dollars delivered to the 18th Congressional District through her efforts was \$459,977,898. Furthermore, in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2005, H.R. 4818, she helped to bring \$1,094,000 in HUD-related funding to the District.

She has sponsored a number of legislative initiatives dealing with children and economic development and has been cited as the "Legislator of the Year" by the National Mental Health Association. As a member of Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees, Rep. Jackson Lee has been able to solve a number of staffing problems for Houston's international airports and channel federal resources to securing the southern border.

[Photo Gallery](#)

Hailed by EBONY magazine as one of the "100 Most Fascinating Black Women of the Century," and "Congressional Quarterly," as one of the 50 most effective members in Congress.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1994 to represent the 18th Congressional District of Houston, Texas. In her most recent election to the 108th Congress, she captured over 77% of the vote.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee's swearing-in as a Member of the 108th Congress marks her fifth term in the U.S. House of Representatives where she continues to be an active member of Congress, pursuing and successfully achieving a number of legislative objectives.

She is First Vice Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. She has distinguished herself as a staunch defender of the Constitution, civil rights and juvenile justice, protection of America's health needs, gun safety and responsibility, economic empowerment for low and middle income America.

In addition, the Congresswoman has been out-spoken on human rights issues and has passed legislation that instructs the National Science Foundation to donate surplus computers and scientific equipment to elementary and secondary schools.

The Congresswoman also increased funding for the Sims Bayou flood control by \$3.5 million which assisted in ending the flooding of residential communities in Harris County, Texas.

During the 106th Congress, Congresswoman Jackson Lee successfully spearheaded the passage of two major pieces of legislation, House Joint Resolution 98, a bill that she authored with Senator Kennedy which honors all minority veterans who fought or served in World War II and declares May 25, 2000 as a Day of Honor in their memory, and H.R. 2130, the "Hillory J. Farias and Samantha Reid Date Rape Prevention Drug Act, named for two women (one of which was from the Congresswoman's home state of Texas) who died after ingesting the date rape drug Gamma Hydroxy-butyrate ("GHB") which was also signed into law by the President.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee has also successfully worked to establish an Office of Special populations within the Agency for Health Research and Quality to gather statistical information to establish health needs for minorities, women, children and the elderly living in inner-cities and rural areas. In addition, the Congresswoman has recently attached over sixteen amendments to several major pieces of legislation, thus making her one of the leading legislators in Congress.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee, a veteran of both corporate and private law practice, is a member of the House Committee on the Judiciary where she is a member of the Subcommittee on Crime and was selected as the first African-American woman to serve as the Ranking Democratic on the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims. In this leadership role, Congresswoman Jackson Lee has worked to overhaul the Immigration and Naturalization Service to better address the nation's immigration laws. In fact, Congresswoman Jackson Lee recently joined a number of her colleagues in Congress in meeting high tech business executives and touring their facilities.

The Congresswoman is also a member of the House Committee on Science, where she sits on the subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics. A supporter of NASA and its contribution to American science and medical research Congresswoman Jackson Lee offered an amendment in 1999 to restore funds to NASA during the Appropriations process. In this role, the Congresswoman has been a strong advocate for Historically Black Colleges and Universities where she has convened a meeting of the presidents of these institutions in Washington, DC and has worked to ensure that part of NASA's funding is used for the recruitment and training of students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities. She also advocates for Hispanic students and Hispanic serving institutions. In recognition of her outstanding contributions to Science, the National Technical Association (NTA) of Scientists and Engineers honored the Congresswoman as one of their 1998 Top Women in the Sciences.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee is also a member of the newly formed Select Committee on Homeland Security. She serves on the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security and Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Science, and Research & Development.

During the 105th Congress, Congresswoman Jackson Lee founded the bipartisan Congressional Children's Caucus, which included many of her colleagues in Congress. This Caucus was responsible for legislation that strengthened adoption laws, and promoted labor for public housing residents. During this Congress, the Congresswoman was also an active member of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law where she spearheaded legislation that would protect child support and payments in bankruptcy proceedings, ensure that all priority payments like child support and alimony would be paid before any unsecured creditors, and would strike provisions that made unsecured or credit card debt competitive with child support and alimony payments. As a result of the Congresswoman's hard work she was selected to be a conferee on the Bankruptcy Bill's Conference Report.

In the 104th Congress, the Congresswoman was elected President of the Democratic Freshman Class, and was appointed to serve as the freshman member of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee. Also, the Speaker of the House appointed her to the Telecommunications Reform bill. This bill, which was one of the major bills to have been considered during the 104th Congress, created new opportunities for regional telephone, long distance, broadcast and cable industries. During her tenure in Congress, Congresswoman Jackson Lee has served as Co-Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, Co-Chair of the Democratic Caucus's Children's Taskforce, Speaker on the Bi-Partisan Taskforce on Youth Violence, member of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issue, the Congressional Black Caucus where she has served as the Whip for two terms, the Aeronautics and Space Caucus and the House Democratic Caucus Task Forces on Hunger, Entertainment Caucus, Welfare Reform, Economic Renewal, Affirmative Action and Travel and Tourism along with her service in the House Internet Caucus. Congresswoman Jackson Lee was also awarded for her outstanding work on mental health legislation in 1998.

Before her election to Congress, Congresswoman Jackson Lee served two terms as one of the first African American women At-Large members of the Houston City Council where she also chaired the first Human Relations Committee. Prior to her Council service, she was an Associate Municipal Court Judge for the City of Houston.

While a member of the city council, Congresswoman Jackson Lee was instrumental in the passage of legislation dealing with human rights. She also concentrated on issues such as homelessness, gun safety and responsibility, cable television regulations, and the revision of the Traffic Modification Ordinance. Her Council service also involved major efforts related to aviation, and urban redevelopment and revitalization. Her commitment to community issues and problems caused Congresswoman Jackson Lee to lend her efforts to numerous civic and professional organizations. She was an active member of the State Bar of Texas, and is only one of three African-American women to have served as Director of the State Bar of Texas. From 1987 to 1988, she chaired the Justice Court Subcommittee of the Texas Bar. Congresswoman Jackson Lee is also a former Director of Texas Young Lawyer's Association, and was Chair of its Minority Affairs Committee.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee received her undergraduate degree from Yale University, graduating from the Honors Program in Political Science. She went on to receive her Juris Doctorate from the University of Virginia School of Law.

Congresswoman Jackson Lee is married to Dr. Elwyn C. Lee, Vice Chancellor of the University of Houston System and Special Assistant to the Chancellor of the University of Houston System. She is the mother of Erica Shelwyn, and Jason Cornelius Bennett Lee

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